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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 000197

SENSITIVE
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DOE FOR GPERSONS, CHAYLOCK
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COMMERCE FOR KBURRESS
USDOC FOR 3130/USFC/OIO/ANESA/DHARRIS
STATE PASS USTR FOR LISER, AGAMA
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/09/2029
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [NI](#)
SUBJECT: NIGERIA: NO LOVE LOST BETWEEN GOVERNOR AMAECHI AND
HIS GODFATHER

REF: ABUJA 482

Classified By: Acting Consul General Helen C. Hudson for Reasons 1.4 (B
,D)

¶1. (C) Summary: Despite several attempts to reconcile their differences, Rivers State Governor Rotimi Amaechi and his erstwhile political godfather, former Governor Peter Odili still harbor mutual animosity. Odili believes that recent recommendations by a truth and reconciliation commission established by Amaechi that he be investigated for his role in communal violence is part of Amaechi's plans to discredit his eight years tenure as governor. For his part, Amaechi still appears to smart from efforts by Odili to have him removed from the PDP ticket during the 2007 gubernatorial election. The feud is unlikely to end soon and it continues to take its toll on efforts to advance good governance in the state. End summary.

¶2. (C) The rift between Governor Rotimi Amaechi and former Governor Peter Odili is far from being over despite peace initiatives by several individuals and groups. The long-standing relationship between both Amaechi and Odili, widely believed to be Amaechi's political godfather, deteriorated following political wrangling surrounding the 2007 Rivers State gubernatorial election. Then Governor Odili was allegedly instrumental in successful efforts to have Amaechi replaced by Odili's cousin as the PDP's candidate for governor of Rivers State, despite the fact that Amaechi won the PDP primary election. Omehia subsequently won the April 2007 election, which Amaechi successfully challenged in court. On October 25, 2007 the Supreme Court declared Amaechi the rightful winner of the election.

¶3. (C) On April 3, Polspec met the Governor in company of three guests at a reception in Lagos. The guests included Wole Olanipekun, a prominent Nigerian attorney; Mr. Isaac Jolapamo, chairman of the Indigenous Ship Owners Association of Nigeria (ISAN) and Mr. Femi Olanipekun, a lawyer and son of Chief Olanipekun. When queried by Wole Olanipekun about the state of his relations with Odili, Amaechi regretted that in spite of his peace overtures, Odili has continued to spurn efforts by Amaechi and other groups to reconcile the two men.

He claimed that Odili read sinister meanings into virtually all his actions as governor and believed Amaechi was out to discredit him.

14. (C) Governor Amaechi cited recent allegations by the truth and reconciliation commission that Odili played a role in several communal clashes when he was governor as the reason for Odili's suspicion of him. On November 29, 2007, Governor Amaechi set up the commission to reconcile aggrieved communities in Rivers State. The commission submitted its report in February 2009. In it, the committee recommended that a judicial commission be set up by Governor Amaechi to investigate Odili and a former federal minister for their role in several communal clashes while Odili was Governor. According to Amaechi, Odili believes that the establishment of the commission was a deliberate attempt to embarrass him and tarnish his eight years as Governor. Amaechi denied that this was the case and claimed that his actions were in the larger interest of the people of Rivers State.

15. (C) Comment: The Odili-Amaechi imbroglio is yet another example of how the quest for power had impacted once cozy relations between political godfathers and their godsons. In Oyo State, a similar dispute between PDP chieftain the late Lamidi Adedibu and former Governor Rasheed Ladoja let to Ladoja's impeachment in January 2005. In Enugu State, former Governor Chimaroke Nnamani fell out with Governor Sullivan Chime, his protg, following a dispute arising from the 2007 election which Chime won. In 2006, former Anambra governor Chris Ngige lost out to his godfather, Chris Uba, after a prolonged power squabble that let to the removal of Ngige as

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governor. The sad part is that these disputes take enormous toll on the regular citizens the state as governors battle to outsmart their godfathers at the expense of good governance and service delivery. In the North in Zamfara and Kebbi, we are seeing similar occurrences of a breakdown between godfather and protg which will likely have the same impact on political posturing for the 2011 elections (ref). End comment.
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